Barker Speaks: The Ccru interview with professor D C Barker.

Daniel Charles Barker has been Professor of Anorganic Semiotics at Kingsport College (MVU, Mass.) since 1992. His extraordinary intellectual achievements resist easysummarization, involving profound and polymathic engagement across the entire range of life and earth sciences, in addition to archaeocultural research, mathematical semiotics, anatomical linguistics, and informatic engineering. Trained as a cryptographer in the early 1970s, he has spent his life decoding ancient scripts, quasibiotic residues, and anomalous mineral patterns (amongst other things). In late Autumn 1998 Ccru met with Professor Barker in his office at MVU. The following is an edited transcript of that meeting.

Tic-Systems. Cryptography has been my guiding thread, right through. What is geotraumatics about, even now? - A rigorous practice of decoding. So I haven't really shifted at all in this respect. There is a voyage, but a strangely immobile one.

I started out at MIT working in the information sciences - my thesis proposal was quite conservative, involving mostly technical issues to do with noise reduction and signal modulation - but MVU was just getting started, and my research was transferred across to them. That led to various contacts, and from there to employment with a NASA-related organization that has particular interests connected to SETI activity. My task was to help toughen-up the theoretical basis of their signals analysis. They wanted to know how to discriminate - in principle - between intelligent communication and complex pattern derived from nonintelligent sources. To cut a long story short, it became increasingly obvious to me that although they said they were hunting for intelligence, what they were really seeking was organization. The whole program was fundamentally misguided. Various people had big problems with the direction of my research, which had basically veered-off the organizational model. The social friction became intolerable and I had to leave, which was messy because of my high-level security clearance ...

Suborganizational pattern is where things really happen. When you strip-out all thesedimented redundancy from the side of the investigation itself -

the assumption of intentionality, subjectivity, interpretability, structure,etc - what remains are assemblies of functionally interconnected microstimulus, or tic-systems: coincidental information deposits,seismocryptions,suborganic quasireplicators (bacterialcircuitries, polypoid diagonalizations,interphase R-Virus, Echo-DNA, ionizing nanopopulations), plus the macromachineries of their suppression, or depotentiation. Prevailingsignaletics and information-science are both insufficiently abstract and over-theoretical in this regard. They cannot see the machine for the apparatus, or the singularity for the model. So tic-systems require an approach that is cosmic-abstract - hypermaterialist - and also participative, methods that do not interpret assemblies asconcretizations of prior theories, and immanent models that transmute themselves at the level of the signals they process. Tic-systems are entirely intractable to subject/object segregation, or to rigid disciplinary typologies. There is no order of nature, no epistemology or scientificmetaposition, and no unique level of intelligence. To advance in this area, which is the cosmos, requires new cultures or - what amounts to the same - new machines.

The problem was: how to quantify disorganized multiplicities? Diagonal, irregular, molecular, and nonmetric quantities require a scale that is itself nonmetric, that escapes overcoding. Standard procedures of measurement and classification prove entirely inadequate, since they presuppose rigid conceptual segmentation by quantity and quality (Deleuze-Guattari's twin-pincers of molarity, type and degree). Once things are being worked out at the level of tic-assemblies - or flat ticking arrays - there are only intensive populations, and measurement has to give way to engineering fusional multiplicities: systems that count themselves only in the way they propagate, immanently numbering multitudes, likenanoplastic quantum swirls. Eventually a machinic solution was provided by the Tick-Distributor, but that came later ... At first there was just the equation, precipitated in what I still thought to be my own body, virtual tic-density = geotraumatic tension.

Geotraumatics. I came to Freud relatively late, associating it with oedipal reductionism, and more generally with apsychologistic stance that was simply irrelevant to cryptographic work. It's important to remark here - no doubt we'll get back to this - that everything productive in signals analysis stems from stripping out superfluous

prejudices about the source and meaning of complex functional patterns. I took - and still take - the vigorous repudiation of hermeneutics to be the key to theoretical advance in processing sign-systems. It was EchidnaStillwell who helped me to see Freud from the other side. It was a difficult period for me. There had been a lot of painful fall-out from the Nasa work. Psychotherapists were involved, in part attempting topathologize and discredit my research, and in part responding to real stress-related symptoms. Between the two was a grey zone of traumatic dysfunction and paranoia involving difficult feedback effects.Stillwell persuaded me that the only way to get through this was to try and make sense of it, and that this was not the same as submitting to the interpretative mode. On the contrary. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud takes a number of crucial initial steps towards mapping theGeocosmic Unconscious as a traumaticmegasystem, with life and thought dynamically quantized in terms ofanorganic tension, elasticity, or machinicplexion. This requires the anorganizational-materialistretuning of an entire vocabulary: trauma, unconscious, drive, association, (screen-) memory, condensation, regression, displacement, complex, repression, disavowal (e.g. theun- prefix), identity, and person.

Deleuze and Guattari ask: Who does the Earth think it is? It's a matter of consistency. Start with the scientific story, which goes like this: between four point five and four billion years ago - during the Hadean epoch - the earth was kept in a state of superheated molten slag, through the conversion of planetesimal and meteoritic impacts into temperature increase (kinetic tothermic energy). As the solar-system condensed the rate and magnitude of collisions steadily declined, and the terrestrial surface cooled, due to the radiation of heat into space, reinforced by the beginnings of the hydrocycle. During the ensuing -Archaen - epoch the molten core was buried within acrustal shell, producing an insulated reservoir of primal exogeneous trauma, thegeocosmic motor of terrestrial transmutation. And that's it. That's plutonics, or neoplutonism. It's all there:anorganic memory, plutonic looping of external collisions into interior content, impersonal trauma as drive-mechanism. The descent into the body of the earth corresponds to a regression throughgeocosmic time.

Trauma is a body. Ultimately - at its pole of maximum disequilibrium - it's an iron thing. At MVU they call it Cthelll: the interior third of terrestrial

mass, semifluid metallic ocean,megamolecule, and pressure-cooker beyond imagination. It's hotter than the surface off the sun down there, three thousand clicks below the crust, and all that thermic energy is sheer impersonalnonsubjective memory of the outside, running the plate-tectonic machinery of the planet via the conductive and convective dynamics of silicate magma flux, bathing the whole system inelectomagnetic fields as it tidally pulses to the orbit of the moon.Cthelll is the terrestrial inner nightmare, nocturnal ocean, Xanadu: the anorganic metal-body trauma-howl of the earth, cross-hatched by intensities, traversed by thermic waves and currents, deranged particles, ionic strippings andgluttings, gravitational deep-sensitivities transduced into nonlocal electromesh, and feeding vulcanism ... that's whyplutonic science slides continuously into schizophrenic delirium.

Fast forward seismology and you hear the earth scream. Geotrauma is an ongoing process, whose tension is continually expressed - partially frozen - in biological organization. For instance, the peculiarly locked-up lifeforms we tend to see as typical - those more-or-less obedient todarwinian selection mechanics - are less than six hundred million years old. They began with the planetary oxygenization crisis, triggered by the saturation of crustal iron, followed by mass oxygen-poisoning of the prokaryotic biosystem and the emergence of a eukaryotic regime. Eukaryotic cells are highly suppressive. They implement a nuclear command-control model based ongenomic ROM, affined to meiosis-mitosisdiplocapture, hierarchical organization, andmulticellular specialization. Even the distinction between ontogeny and phylogeny - distinct time-orders of the individual and the species - makes little sense withouteukaryotic nuclear read-only programming andimmunological identity. Evolutionism presupposes specific geotraumatic outcomes.

To take a more recent example, the efflorescence of mammalian life occurs in the wake of the K/T-Missile, which combined with massive magma-plume activity in the Indian Ocean to shut-down the Mesozoic Era, sixty-five million years ago. Irruptive vulcanism plus extraterrestrial impact, linked by coincidence, or plutonic looping. So there is a catastrophic transition to a post-saurianmegafauna regime, part of a much larger overallreorganization of terrestrial symptomaticity, providing an index of neohadean resurgence. And what is mammalian life relative to the greatsaurians? Above all, an

innovation in mothering! Suckling asbiosurvivalism. Tell me about your mother and you're travelling back to K/T, not into the personal unconscious.

Spinal-Catastrophism. For humans there is the particular crisis of bipedal erect posture to be processed. I was increasingly aware that all my real problems were modalities of back-pain, or phylogenetic spinal injury, which took me back to the calamitous consequences of theprecambrian explosion, roughly five hundred million years ago. The ensuing period is incrementally body-mapped by metazoan organization. Obviously there are discrete quasi-coherentneuromotor tic-flux patterns, whose incrementally rigidified stages are swimming, crawling, and (bipedal) walking. Elaine Morgan persuasively traces the origin of protohuman bipedalism to certain deleterious plate-tectonic shifts. The model isbioseismic. Crustal convulsions and animal body-plan are rigorously interconnected, and the entire Aquatic Ape Theory constitutes an exemplarygeotraumatic analysis. Erect posture andperpendicularization of the skull is a frozen calamity, associated with a long list of pathological consequences, amongst which should be included most of the human psychoneuroses. Numerous trends in contemporary culture attest to an attempted recovery of the icthyophidian- orflexomotile-spine: horizontal and impulsive rather than vertical and stress-bearing.

The issue here - as always - is real and effective regression. It is not a matter of representational psychology. ConsiderHaeckel's widely discredited Recapitulation Thesis, the claim thatontogeny recapitulatesphylogeny. It is a theory compromised by its organicism, but its wholesale rejection was an overreaction. Ballard's response is more productive and balanced, treating DNA as atransorganic memory-bank and the spine as a fossil record, without rigid onto-phylogenic correspondence. The mapping of spinal-levels ontoneuronic time is supple, episodic, and diagonalizing. It concerns plexion between blocks of machinic transition, not strict isomorphic - orstratic redundancy - between scales of chronological order. Mammal DNA contains latent fish-code (amongst many other things).

Palate-Tectonics. Due to erect posture the head has been twisted around, shatteringvertebro-perceptual linearity and setting-up thephylogenetic preconditions for the face. This right-angled pneumatic-oral arrangement produces the vocal-apparatus as a crash-site, in which thoracic

impulses collide with the roof of the mouth. The bipedal head becomes a virtual speech-impediment, a sub-cranial pneumatic pile-up, discharged aslinguo-gestural development and cephalization take-off. Burroughs suggests that the protohuman ape was dragged through its body to expire upon its tongue. Its a twin-axial system, howls and clicks, reciprocally articulated as a vowel-consonant phonetic palette, rigidlyintersegmented to repress staccato-hiss continuous variation and its attendant becomings-animal. That's why stammerings, stutterings, vocal tics, extralingual phonetics, and electrodigital voice synthesis are so laden with biopolitical intensity - they threaten to bypass the anthropostructural head-smash that establishes our identity with logos, escaping in the direction of numbers.

Barker Numbering. Once numbers are no longer overcoded, and thus released from their metric function, they are freed for other things, and tend to become diagrammatic. From the beginning of my tic-systems work the most consistent problems have concerned intensive sequences. Sequence is not order. Order already supposes a doubling, a level of redundancy: the sequenced sequence. A decoded sequence is something else, a sheer numeracy prior to any insertion into chronologic structure. That's why decoding number implies an escape from assumptions of progressive time. Tick multitudes arrive in convergent waves, without subordination to chronology, history, or linear causation. They proceed by infolding, involution, or implex. It's a matter of convergence, and numbers do that, once they're free to. So the first stage required plexive introgression of the tic-density scale, which was numerically rigorized as digital twinning. Treat the decimal numerals as a set of 9-sum twins - zygonovize - and they map an abstract intensive wave, indifferent to magnitude. Everything efficient about digital reduction is concerned with this, since it discovers the key to decimal syzygetic complementarity: 9 = 0. A flattening down to disordered sequentiality, or abstract numerical implex. Nine is the ultimate decimal numeral, operating as positive (or full-body) zero. It is the abstract numeric product of the decimal-magnitude minus one (infinitesimalized as 1 = 0.999... reiterating), which relates to a particular mode of proliferation within capitalist semiotics (of the type $99.99).

Barker-Spiral. The pattern really came together with the Diplozygotic Spiral, which arrived suddenly, by chance. I was playing a game of Decadence,

which I had first encountered many years before. This game already interested me because of its numerical elegance, its complex associations, and its dependence upon a principle of decimal twinning. It had always seemed to hint at a lost syzygetic arithmetism, related to the bilateral symmetry of the human body. Digits are fingers, and they come in decimal packages of two times five. In Decadence five makes ten by doubling, or pairing with itself, scoring zero. Thistantalized me, but I couldn't fit it together theoretically. The quandary was unlocked on this occasion, when one of the participants casually mentioned the existence of an occulted variation of the game, called Subdecadence, based on a system of nine-sum twinning. Subdecadence introduces zeroes, and nine-zero twins. It works byzygonovic numerism. That was stunning enough in itself, but seeing the two together - or seeing between them - was an incredible moment of diagrammatic assemblage. It all spontaneously condensed, and the Spiral clicked into coherence, like a secret door into the long-hidden crypt of the decimal system.

Publications.

AQuasi Chemical Tic Culture Catalysis of Anorganic Pain Wave Matrices@ (Plutonics: Volume X, Number 6, Fall 1990)

>Anorganic Semiotics= (Plutonics: Volume X, Number 9, Fall 1991)

>Spinal Catastrophism= (Plutonics: Volume X, Number 10, Spring 1992)

>Palate Tectonics= (Plutonics: Volume 10, Number 12, Fall 1992)

>Vowels: A Biopolitical Strategy= (Plutonics: Volume X, Number 18, Fall 1994)

What Counts as Human (Kingsport: Kingsport College Press, 1997)

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On receiving an interrupt, decrement the counter to zero.

- William Gibson *Count Zero*

Millennial Mania reaches a certain peak in the "Jerusalem syndrome," which exhibits eschatourism as one element in the programmatic fulfillment of prophecy. Whilst TV evangelists in the USA are exhorting viewers to sell all possessions and flock to Jerusalem, and a papal blessing is promised to those visiting the holy-land at the beginning of the new millennium, theisraeli tourist board, security forces, and the psychiatric profession are preparing for the arrival of up to thirteen million christian pilgrims. An abnormally high rate of psychotic disturbance is confidently anticipated, perhaps succeeded by episodes of mass suicide amongst disillusioned believers.

At Megiddo (the biblicalArmegeddon) they are planning the ultimate sound and light show, involving frog-monsters, the greatest earthquake in history, and toxic hail from heaven (Rev-XVI:16). Such incendiary visions dove-tails neatly with existing regional tensions. In preparation for the millennium, variousjewish and christian groups are plotting to demolish the ElAqsa mosque[1] and the Dome of the Rock. This is seen as the necessary prelude to rebuilding the third and final temple of Solomon, which would lay the mundane foundations for the New Jerusalem, and induce the coming of the Messiah (completion of Oecumenon).

Running counter to such enthusiasm is the fact that as an instrument of propaganda thegregorian calendar is intrinsically flawed. Apocalyptic hopes for AD 2000 systematically confuse millenarian expectations for Christ's thousand year reign (Rev-XX) with millenialist investment of neat calendric intervals. The midnight of December 31st 1999 does not coincide with achristian festival (christmas),[2] has no historically defensible

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[1] This would inevatably lead to a Middle East war as the El Aqsa mosque is the 3rd most sacred Islamic shrine (after Mecca and Medina)

[2] Attempts to link AD2000 with Jesus= birth-date involves blatent historical innacuracy, which can be traced back to Dionysius Exiguus (Little Dennis), who both incorrectly dated the incarnation to 753 AUC of the roman calendar, and -